

CBE Mastery Framework

The work of the REL Southeast's *Measuring Success through Competency Based Learning NC Research Alliance* (2017-2021) led to the creation of the **CBE Mastery Framework**, which defines key components within an authentic CBE environment across the dimensions of Structure, Culture, Teaching, and Learning.

CBE Defined:

As a personalized learning approach, competency-based education (CBE) provides a flexible and engaging learning environment in which progression is based on mastery of explicit learning objectives, or competencies, as demonstrated through evidence of student learning, rather than the time spent in a course/on a topic.



Structure	Culture	Teaching	Learning
Assessment System	Institutional Mission	Teachers as Facilitators/ Coaches	Student Ownership of Learning
Course/Grade Credits	Knowledgeable Staff	Pedagogy	Student Voice
Learning Management System	Culture of Innovation	Tools/Resources for Teaching	Lead Learner
Scheduling	Engaged Parents/Families	Content Expertise	Learning Anytime, Anywhere
Standards / Defined competencies	Engaged Stakeholders	Curriculum Design	
Professional Development	Effective Communications	Assessment Design and Use	
Physical Infrastructure	Culture of Relevance		

STRUCTURE



Support systems and policies are in place to enable and sustain CBE

- Assessment System*** A balanced assessment system with multiple types of and opportunities for assessments, such as open ended, performance-based, project based, computer adaptive, presentations, etc., and no limitations in scheduling assessments (allowing for early testing and re-testing based on individual needs and local policy/procedures).
- Course/Grade Credits*** Students are no longer bound by seat time and have many opportunities to earn credits outside of the classroom (e.g. through credit by demonstrated mastery, credentialing/ certifications, work-based learning/ apprenticeships, project-based learning, etc.).
- Learning Management System (LMS)*** LMS is consistently updated real-time and allows students and parents to work with teachers to set learning targets/goals. Teachers monitor and students/parents track their progress toward mastery of standards/competencies in real-time.
- Scheduling*** Schedules and grade levels are no longer constrained by calendar/time (e.g. no bell schedule) to better meet student needs.
- Standards / Defined competencies*** Standards are further broken down into measurable learning targets/objectives with a full implementation of standards-based teaching and learning. Teachers and students know the standards and the learning targets/objectives.
- Professional Development*** Sustained professional development provided around CBE, and also models the CBE framework of being flexible and engaging. Professional development includes a blended approach with self-paced options for teachers to best meet their learning needs.
- Physical Infrastructure*** Schools designed with open learning spaces, teachers and students moving fluidly between classrooms, and seating arranged to enable different types of work and learning styles.

CULTURE



*Environment at the school and classroom levels
supportive of enabling and sustaining CBE*

***Institutional
Mission***

Mission statement explicitly defines a focus on CBE.

***Knowledgeable
Staff***

Staff facilitate the mastery-based framework throughout all facets of their school. They drive the culture shift and build the school based on personalized student achievement designed around personalized learning.

***Culture of
Innovation***

The school/district encourages innovation and allows staff to work across normal boundaries.

***Engaged
Parents/Families***

Parents/Families are informed and aware of CBE and are invited by the district/school to participate and have an active role in learning for their students. They have access to tools/resources (such as an LMS) to monitor student progress. Parents/Families can advocate for the needs of their students.

***Engaged
Stakeholders***

The school/district frequently and intensely partners with stakeholders; including opportunities for students to earn credits (job shadowing, apprenticeships, internships, etc.) or participate in learning opportunities within the community.

***Effective
Communications***

Communications are planned strategically based on identifying the key stakeholders and necessary messages to be shared (more proactive approach). There are multiple methods and opportunities for two-way communication (face-to-face, social media, website, town hall or kitchen table style meetings, etc.)

***Culture of
Relevance***

Professional Learning for teachers and learning options for students are relevant and timely to the learners' needs in the learning process. Administrators and teachers value staff and student input to improve the culture of learning.

TEACHING



*Instructional practice that enables and sustains
CBE*

- Teachers as Facilitators/Coaches*** Teachers are facilitators of learning, guiding students through their own discoveries and problem solving with the use of data for monitoring and advancing students. There is a deliberate use of student voice/choice to increase relevance and build relationships.
- Pedagogy*** Teachers meet students where they are, monitor for progress, and guide students to be successful in learning and demonstrating their knowledge and skills. Instruction is personalized based on individual and/or group needs.
- Tools/Resources for Teaching*** Teachers have and use tools/resources with real-time data and focus on supporting students in the learning process at different rates – allowing for remediation and advancement based on individual student needs.
- Content Expertise*** School Leaders and Teachers utilize content expertise to place students for remediation and advancement. Teachers collaborate and share expertise across content areas (including non-academic content and skills) to determine instruction and learning experiences for students. There is a balance of academic content expertise and life skills/real-world application relevant in teaching practices.
- Curriculum Design*** Competencies/learning targets are the foundation for curriculum design and teachers and students understand the breakdown and how to measure/demonstrate mastery. Teachers have flexibility and choice throughout the curriculum to help address personalized learning needs in their classrooms.
- Assessment Design and Use*** Assessments are relevant to the learning process for students and are a meaningful measure of what students know and are able to do. Students have multiple assessment options and opportunities to demonstrate mastery.

LEARNING



Students are empowered to direct their learning

Student Ownership of Learning

Students have options/tools available for real-time tracking of their progress and they take responsibility for their learning by setting their own learning targets/goals, moving at their own pace, exploring their own personal interests and demonstrating knowledge through a variety of opportunities and strategies.

Student Voice

Students develop their own structure and guidelines for meeting their own learning outcomes and seek opportunities to expand content knowledge.

Lead Learner

Administrators are the Lead Learner, creating a culture for learning for teachers and students, serving as instructional leaders who provide personalized professional learning. They are fully engaged in learning and model expectations for personalization. Learning needs are supported for all teachers and students.

Learning Anytime, Anywhere

Learning can take place anytime, anywhere. Students can earn credits for internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing, virtual courses, college level courses, on-the-job training, certificates, credentials, etc. that are not bound by school walls or schedules.

SOURCES

Competency-based education (CBE) is a personalized learning approach that provides a flexible and engaging learning environment in which progression is based on mastery of explicit learning objectives, or competencies, as demonstrated through evidence of student learning, rather than the time spent in a course/topic. Transitioning from a traditional classroom to CBE requires, among other things, appropriate structures, a supportive culture, and new methods of teaching and learning. As a tool, the CBE Mastery Framework is intended to support district, school, and classroom leaders in assessing current CBE implementation status across the four areas (structure, culture, teaching, and learning) and identifying actions to take in planning and moving forward with CBE implementation. The CBE Mastery Framework was developed with inputs from school and district leaders in NC and was adapted from the following sources:

- Blackboard CBE Readiness Tool. <https://www.blackboard.com/sites/cbe-readiness-tool/cbe/> (this does not exist anymore – Blackboard just provides references to other CBE organizations and regulations now - <https://www.blackboard.com/services/consulting-services/strategic-transformation/competency-based-education-organizations-regulations> and has a solutions page - <https://www.blackboard.com/en-uk/resources/competency-based-education>)
- Education Elements: Competency-Based Education Framework. <https://www.edelements.com/competency-based-education-framework>
- Gervais, J. (2016). The operational definition of competency-based education. *The Journal of Competency-Based Education*, 1(2), 98–106. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/cbe2.1011>
- KnowledgeWorks: Traditional Education vs. Competency-Based Learning. <https://knowledgeworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/cbe-versus-traditional-education.pdf>
- Ohio’s Competency-Based Education Pilot Self-Assessment Tool. http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Other-Resources/Competency_Based-Education-Pilot/Competency-Based-Education-Self-Assessment-Tool-1.pdf.aspx (updated link to access this - https://openlearninglibrary.mit.edu/assets/courseware/v1/302f91b3bce18273ee2307dee5c79cc1/asset-v1:MITx+0.502x+1T2019+type@asset+block/Ohio_CBE_Pilot_Self-Assessment_Tool.pdf)
- Sturgis, C., Patrick, S., & Pittenger, P. (2011). It’s not a matter of time: Highlights from the 2011 Competency-Based Learning Summit. Retrieved from http://www.aurora-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/iNACOL_Its_Not_A_Matter_of_Time_full_report.pdf